

REMARKS

Claim 72-91 are pending. Applicant has canceled claims 50-71 and added claims 72-91.

The Examiner has rejected claims 50-71 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by Brown. Although applicant has canceled these claims, applicant provides the following remarks relating to the newly added claims.

Applicant's new claims are directed to a technique for generating a schedule for a project. According to applicant's technique, a project is divided into tasks and each task has required resources that are needed to perform the task. For example, a construction project to build a house may have the tasks of laying the foundation, framing the house, installing the roof, landscaping the yard, and so on. The task of laying the foundation may require resources such as three laborers, two cement trucks, and so on. The task of framing the house may require resources such as five framers, a crane to lift wood, a forklift to move wood, and so on.

Traditionally, project scheduling tools schedule a task to start at the earliest time that all the needed resources will be available and other constraints will be satisfied (e.g., completion of a prerequisite task). For example, a project scheduling tool would schedule the framing task to start when the five framers, the crane, and forklift were all available and when the laying foundation task was complete. Such task-based scheduling, however, may result in less than optimal scheduling because the task may not require all of the resources at the outset. For example, if the crane is needed for the first two days of the task and the forklift is needed for the following three days, then the task is scheduled to start when the forklift becomes available even though the crane is available two days earlier. The forklift, however, would be idle for the first two days. The task could more advantageously be scheduled to start two days earlier since the forklift would still be available when needed.

Applicant's technique overcomes the problem of these traditional scheduling tools by automatically dividing tasks into assignments and separately scheduling each assignment, rather than scheduling tasks themselves as a unit. An assignment is a portion of a task that can be completed using a single resource. For example, applicant's technique would divide the framing task into one assignment that can be completed using the crane and another assignment that can be completed using the forklift. Applicant's technique then schedules each assignment separately. For example, the crane assignment might be scheduled to start on day 1, and the forklift assignment might be scheduled to start on day 3. Traditional project scheduling tools would, in contrast, schedule the framing task to start on day 3, since that is when all the resources needed for the task are available.

The newly added claims recite a combination of elements that is neither taught nor suggested by Brown. Each claim recites "resource information" and "task information." Resource information describes a first resource and a second resource that are available to a project along with a first resource constraint and a second resource constraint. Task information identifies tasks of the project along with task constraints. The claims further recite that "at least one designated task having a designated task constraint and specifying at least the first resource and the second resource." The claims recite dividing the designated task in a first assignment completable by the first resource and a assignment completable by the second resource. The claims then recite scheduling "the first assignment based at least on the first assignment constraint and the first resource constraint" and "the second assignment based at least on the second assignment constraint and the second resource constraint."

Applicant respectfully submits that Brown neither teaches nor suggest the combination of such resource information with resource constraints, task information with task constraints, dividing the designated task in a first assignment completable by the first resource and a second assignment completable by the second resource based on resource and task constraints, and scheduling the first and second assignments.

Based on the above amendments and remarks, applicants respectfully request reconsideration of this application and its early allowance. If the Examiner has any questions or believes a telephone conference would expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is encouraged to call the undersigned at (206) 359-8548.

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Respectfully submitted,

By 

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